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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet offers advice for women who are interested in becoming athletic coaches. Opportunities for coaches are discussed in the area of volunteer work as well as job possibilities as a professional coach. Discovering career possibilities through networking is described, and a list of resources is provided. (JD)

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A Woman's Guide To Coaching



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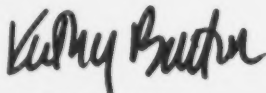
Dear Coach:

Wilson Sporting Goods Co. is very proud to have shared in the development of a **Woman's Guide to Coaching**. The Coaches Advisory Roundtable, "C.A.R.", has been an exciting insightful group to work with and we believe they deserve all the support the sporting goods industry can offer.

In the **Wilson Report**, (1988 Survey) we found "lack of skill" to be one of the major reasons high school girls drop out of sports. We hope this booklet can enhance your own coaching skills in an effort to combat girls' drop out rate by turning them into more highly skilled athletes.

Wilson wants to ensure sports are a fun and integral part of every girl's education. We believe that with your help, more females will learn about discipline, teamwork and goal setting, skills that will equip them for life long success.

Thanks for your help!



Kathy Button
Director
Marketing Communications

Acknowledgements

The Coaches Advisory Roundtable (CAR) is pleased to join the Women's Sports Foundation in thanking Wilson Sporting Goods for the grant which made this booklet possible.

It is with great appreciation that we acknowledge the contributions of Lisa Rubarth and Mariah Burton Nelson for their knowledge and expertise in the writing and editing of this book, and to Ms. Rubarth for design and layout, and to all members of the CAR for their vision, input, advice and review. Special thanks also to Laurie Priest and Marymount University, and Mel Labat and Williamsburg Middle School for the use of facilities, athletes and coaches for the on-location photo session.

The CAR, established in 1986, is a group of sport professionals from across the country. The roundtable is concerned with the alarming decline of women in leadership positions in sport. Therefore, the CAR is devoted to encouraging and promoting women in coaching, officiating and sports administration.

We also salute the thousands of women coaches, administrators and officials currently serving as role models and sending the message that sport has no gender.

Perhaps you've played high school or college sports and are eager to share your skills with others.

Perhaps your children play soccer, and when you drop them off at practice you wonder if you could stay to help out.

Maybe you already coach a high school tennis team, and think you would like to become a college coach.

In any case, congratulations.

You are among a growing number of women who are joining—and improving—the honorable profession called coaching.

Women and Coaching

You are Needed

Not only are you welcome to become a coach, or to advance your coaching career, you're needed. A decade ago, 90 percent of women's high school and college sports were coached by women. Today, only about 35 percent of women's high school and 50 percent of women's college sports are headed by women. At the youth level, there are even fewer women: of 70,000 coaches who are members of the National Youth Sport Coaches Association, only 15 percent are women.

"I see coaching as a way to influence not only the future generation of girls, but boys as well."

Role Modeling

Girls need to see women in strong decision-making positions to learn that they, too, can become leaders—whether it be in sport or some other aspect of their lives. Young women need women to inspire them to feel good about their bodies, about movement, about teamwork. You don't have to be a great player to be an effective coach. Remember the one coach who showed you the joy of being an athlete? You could provide that inspiration for dozens of young women.

Better Coaches

Because of socialization to be care-givers, women may be more sensitive than men to the needs of children. Women tend to emphasize team unity rather than cut-throat competition, and to be patient and accepting of athletes' failures. This can be a distinct advantage for the coach and the athletes. Women also can be more receptive to education. Not believing that they know it all, women are frequently more willing to take classes and equip themselves with the necessary tools to help young athletes have a more positive sport experience.

Boys Need Women, Too

At the youth level, women coach boys on coed soccer, baseball, or swimming teams. But fewer than one percent of boys' and men's high school and college teams are coached by women. There's no reason why women shouldn't coach high school and college boys as well. Boys who are coached by women learn that women can be effective leaders. Boys can also benefit from the compassion and nurturance that women can bring to sport.



What's in It For You

Teaching young people to trust their bodies, their teammates, and their coach can be extremely rewarding. As a coach, you'll also have an opportunity to learn your own lessons: how to communicate effectively, how to motivate your athletes, how to handle pressure.

Marketable Skills

Coaches have to be planners and organizers, as well as teachers. Many of these skills translate directly to the business world. Once you can hold the attention of a dozen eight-year-olds, public speaking will be a snap. Once you can plan a practice, you can set an agenda for a meeting. And once you understand how to give individuals attention and maintain group cohesion, you'll have an edge on most managers!

A Place of Honor

In addition to helping young people enjoy sports, you'll earn prestige, opportunities for advancement, and perhaps even some cash. Here are some of the benefits:

Praise: Athletes, parents and peers may tell you you're doing a good job.

Recognition: Newspapers may print your name and possibly even a story about you or your team. (Although you generally need to call reporters and let them know you've got a story)

Travel: You may get to visit anywhere from the next community to the next continent.

Experience: You'll be able to further your career by listing your accomplishments on your resume.

Time and Money

How much time coaching requires and what financial rewards it offers will depend on the age and experience of your athletes and your own skills. At the youth level, your team will practice from one to two nights a week and will usually play a game on weekends; you'll also need to spend some time planning practices and/or game strategy. You may even need to take part in some fundraising projects for your team.

If you coach high school or junior college, you'll practice every day, travel with the team and you may have other responsibilities, from teaching physical education to serving as the school's athletic trainer. At the Division I college level, the job is full-time; you and your coaching staff will have recruiting, scouting and media responsibilities as well as daily practices and frequent games.

Like time commitment, salaries vary widely, from a pat-on-the-back at the youth level to \$40,000 or so for a Division I basketball coach and more for the coach of a national team.



Volunteer Opportunities

Education and Training

If you've played sports in high school or college, or are enthusiastic about coaching, and enjoy teaching, that's a good start, but those qualities alone won't make you a good coach. Fortunately, training programs for beginners are plentiful and inexpensive. Hands-on experience is also readily available, since experienced coaches are frequently willing to share their skills. Below are five key steps toward your first coaching job.

1 Receive training and certification in general coaching skills. In an introductory coaching course, you'll learn the basics of sport psychology, sport physiology, sport medicine, time management, and parent management. You'll be introduced to various coaching styles, techniques, and philosophies. You'll be offered reading material and will, before receiving certification, be required to demonstrate your knowledge, often with a take-home test.



2 You may want sport-specific training, especially if you do not have extensive experience in the sport you want to coach. Coaches associations and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of various sports conduct clinics for their junior, adult and elite teams (see back page).

3 Join a local community or recreation league if you would like more playing experience, or would like to experience your sport firsthand if you have never played.

4 Ask local college or high school coaches if you may attend their practice sessions to see how practices are organized and to even get some ideas for new drills. Do this early in the season, when fundamentals are stressed and the pressure is low.

5 Attend clinics, camps and local college seminars on coaching. Here you'll advance your understanding of coaching and have an opportunity to meet other coaches. To find out about clinics, camps and seminars, call your local high school or college athletic department.

"It was my first season coaching my son's soccer team and it was really hard work. It was all worth it when my daughter came up to me and said, 'Mom, I want to be a coach when I grow up.'"



Job Opportunities

Who would you like to coach? Beginners? Young children? Members of your religious organization? Before you look for a coaching opportunity, imagine the ideal position. Take into account your experience and expertise, the age of athlete you might be most familiar or comfortable with, and your availability.

Also consider your coaching philosophy, even if you're just beginning to develop one. Would you prefer to be in a highly competitive league? Or would you prefer a league that mandates that all children play, regardless of skill level? Don't forget to consider coaching boys' sports, coed sports, and sports for disabled youths.

Once you know what you want, see what's available. An estimated 10-25 million children play organized sports, so positions are fairly easy to obtain. Look in your local community newspaper for youth leagues or associations. The following organizations may have local leagues:

Recreation Departments

**Girl Scouts and
Boy Scouts**

Elementary Schools

**Girls' Clubs and
Boys' Clubs**

Churches and Synagogues

YWCA's and YMCA's

Community Clubs

*(such as ASA softball,
Little League baseball,
swim clubs, etc.)*

Applying for Jobs

Sometimes, a verbal application is sufficient. Other times, you will be asked to provide a resume, coaching certificate and personal references.

Be prepared to explain why you want to coach and what qualifies you to coach. Even if you don't have coaching experience, you probably have other skills that are applicable. If you're a mother, for example, you probably know some things about organization, discipline, and first aid. If you've been a camp counselor, Girl Scout leader, or high school or college athlete, mention these experiences when you apply for the position.



Also be prepared to ask questions. How long is the season? Are coaches required to assist with fund-raising? Is there community or school support? Be sure you understand what you're committing yourself to before you make the commitment. If you don't feel ready to be a head coach, offer to serve as an assistant, preferably for a knowledgeable coach whom you respect.

Reflections on Coaching

Lori Gilstrap

Assistant Strength Coach, Georgia Tech University

I consider myself somewhat of a pioneer. When I first got into coaching I went to one of the male leaders in the profession and he said to get out of the field, that I'd never make it. But we've progressed. I've had to pay my dues, but now he sees that and respects what I've done. I mostly had male coaches when I was younger, but my one female coach was very inspira-

tional to me. Hopefully I can serve as a role model to some young women. I just want to let them know it's okay to be strong. Not only do more women need to work with

women's teams but they should have the opportunity to work with the men's teams as well.

I've set my aspirations very high. Someday I'd like to work at the professional level. The jobs are there if you go through the right steps. You've got to go through an internship or mentor program or something of that nature so that you can get your foot in the door. Coaching takes a large time commitment. If you don't have the time to give it's not the profession to get into. My whole life is centered around coaching. But I love it. The energy from that keeps me going.



Debbie Brown

Assistant Olympic Coach, Head Volleyball Coach, Arizona State

I love coaching. I can't think of any other job I'd rather be doing. In a lot of situations, women coach women better. There are emotional highs and lows only a woman can understand. It's important to identify with what an athlete is going through. Also, some of the men who get into coaching never competed at a high level. That's an advantage too, for women who have competed in the sport.

In college, athletes are still shaping their values, so you get to watch them grow up. It's important to influence them in a positive way.

Coaching is a lot of work, and requires a lot of time. It's a hard field to break into. You have to be willing to sacrifice financially.

Administrators are looking for women. If you're qualified, there are openings. They are aware that there are a lot of men in women's sports, and would like to hire women if they feel they're as qualified as men. I've had administrators call me and ask for recommendations. There's not a big pool of women to draw from. If you love it and stick with it you'll find a position.



Reflections on Coaching

Nina Thompson

Head Soccer Coach, Holtzen Arms School and 19 and Under Girls

As a young athlete, I was coached by a woman who was an Olympic swimmer, so her aspirations were quite high. She was an amazing role model for me as a coach. She had high expectations of herself and therefore high expectations of us. She encompassed just about everything I could possibly imagine admiring in someone. Role modelling is so important. I

can't tell you how many parents have said how excited they are to have a role model like me for their girls because so many of their coaches are men and fathers and not

the mothers. I try to get the most out of each individual person and I'm very conscious of not showing favoritism because there is such a wide variety of best and worst players and it would be easy to discourage someone. I want all my players to go on and play in college. I want them to feel comfortable in knowing that they could someday coach their 6 or 7 year-old child because they have enough knowledge and respect and love for the game. I get a lot of feedback from parents about how important it is that their kids are coached by a woman with that perspective.



Vivian Stringer

Head Coach, University of Iowa Women's Basketball

If a male and female are coaching together, it is often assumed that he must be the brains, so to speak—the one who gives technical expertise—and that she is the one who gives emotional support to the athletes. This perception is bothersome to me. I feel that it is extremely important that young women and society see and know that women can be very capable leaders.

Because of this, I deliberately work toward presenting women as leaders and role models.

If I had an opportunity to work with a male or female assistant of comparable skills and backgrounds, then I would hire the female to be the coach. Even if she were a little less qualified, I would still give her the opportunity. Often she would be less qualified because she hasn't had the opportunity to participate in organized sports since the third or fourth grade like men have. She hasn't had the full opportunity to contribute to society. For this, society is the loser. I want young women and girls to know that they can do anything they want to do. Those of us who can must support opportunities for women.



Professional Opportunities

Education and Training

Junior High or Senior High

Requirements- Contact your state department of education, local school district or high school activities association for your state's requirements to coach in the public schools. Not all states require a teaching certificate, but all states do require some evidence of coaching competency— sometimes ACEP or NYSCA certificates. Private and parochial schools have different requirements; contact those schools for specifics.

Training- The high school activities association can also give you the names of coaching and officiating associations in your state or the dates of upcoming clinics in your sport(s). If you cannot locate the number of your state association, contact the National Federation of State High School Associations listed in the back of this booklet.

Education- If your school does not require specific coaching certificates, contact your local college or junior college physical education or sport science department to determine upcoming classes. You will probably want to take courses in Athletic Training, Sport Psychology, Physiology of Exercise, etc. Talk with your counselor about your goals and ask which classes would be appropriate.



"You have to be highly organized, you have to be good with people and you have to have a thick skin. You'll get pressure from the athletes, parents, administration and yourself. But I really love coaching."

Junior College, College or University

For these jobs, you'll usually need a Master's degree or a major or minor in physical education or sport science; also preferred is coaching experience at the high school level. To get experience, volunteer to serve as an assistant or graduate assistant for a head coach. You will be able to make valuable contacts and find out first hand what coaching at this level is all about. If you are in college, ask your coach about summer sport camps. By working as a coach or counselor at these camps you'll gain valuable experience.

Looking for Jobs

When looking for a coaching job, it is important to be willing to work your way up the ladder. People tend to hire competent people who they either know or are known by someone they respect. Therefore, you must make contact with other coaches and administrators. To make contacts and stay abreast of current coaching issues, join coaching associations. (see "Resources" in the back of this book.)

Junior or Senior High



Openings for these positions should be listed in your local newspaper. Review the paper to find where jobs are listed; they may not only be under "Coach," but under Softball Coach, Youth Coach or Part-time Coach. Check for listings on your local recreation department job board or at a university career center. Even when positions are not currently available, it's a good idea to prepare a resume and send it with cover letters to the athletic directors or principals at local schools. If you need some experience, offer to accept a volunteer position as

an assistant or junior varsity coach. Go to games, familiarize yourself with their program and history, and then introduce yourself to the coaches and athletic director, letting your interests and expertise be known.

Junior College, College, or University

Before you start looking for a coaching position, establish your priorities. Are you looking for an assistant or head coaching position? Do you want a job at a small or large school, local or out of state, or are you flexible? Also, talk to as many different coaches as you can and ask about different aspects of their jobs. Attend games and watch as a prospective coach.



You should be gathering information about what is expected from a coach at each type of school.

Watch for openings in the newspaper, or subscribe to coaching journals or newsletters such as the *NCAA News* or the *AAHPERD Update* (see "Resources" at the back of this book). And, remember to use your own personal network of friends, associates and colleagues to find out what is available.

"The most enjoyable aspect of coaching is the interaction I have with the players. I know and take very seriously the example and role model I am to them."

Applying for a Job

Many women fail to apply for jobs for fear of failure, or because they feel they are not qualified, when in fact, they are qualified and capable of succeeding. Make sure that you give yourself every chance—confidence is only developed by getting out there and doing it. Even though you may not get the job you want the first time you apply, the experience you gain is invaluable.

At this level, you will probably be asked to send a resume, formal application, and letters of reference. Be sure your resume includes all playing and coaching experience, including any volunteer work. Also list coaching clinics you have attended and coaching associations to which you belong.

A few days after you mail your application, follow with a phone call to be sure that your materials arrived. This will also give you the opportunity to ask when interviews will be conducted, and who will conduct them. Before your interview, learn everything you can about the organization, the program and even the interviewers so that you can ask informed questions. The day of your interview, be sure to dress professionally (a business suit) and arrive a few minutes early.

“Men will get involved in coaching, even if they're ill-prepared. But a lot of women won't. They just lack confidence.”

Some typical questions:

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What is your coaching philosophy?

Why do you want this position?

At what level do you expect to be coaching in five or ten years?

Some guidelines for the interview itself:

Show your stuff. Keep in mind that the school or organization is trying to get to know you as a person, as well as a coach. So let your enthusiasm show, or your playfulness, compassion, dedication, or sense of humor.

Come prepared with questions. What are their expectations of a coach? What kind of relationship exists between athletes and the coach (or former coach)? At the college level, it is also reasonable to ask about the recruiting budget and the school's requirements for student-athletes.

Be positive and truthful.

Toot your own horn. If your statistics are good, mention them; if you have received praise from parents, community leaders, and the students themselves, mention that. It's okay to repeat information on your resume; the interviewer may be meeting with many candidates and has probably not memorized yours. It may also be appropriate to give specific examples of how you handled challenging situations.

Before leaving, ask about the "hiring timeline" so you know when to expect to hear from them. Sometimes you will be asked to return for a second interview. After the interview, write a short, formal letter thanking the person for taking the time to interview you and letting her or him know that you are interested in the position.



Coaches Advisory Roundtable

Planning for the Future

Professional planning is an ongoing process. Even if you currently have a coaching job you enjoy, it's a good idea to keep one eye to the future. You may eventually want to coach older athletes, disabled athletes, or a different sport. You may want to become an official or administrator.

If you need further qualifications for the job you have in mind, you may need to go back to school for a teaching certificate, Bachelor's or Master's degree or a degree in sports administration or sports information. Your coaching experience to date should help you get accepted; be sure to emphasize your experience in your application.

Develop a plan for your career and stick with it. And be on the lookout for ways to get more experience. You may want to volunteer for a committee in your coaching association to put you in touch with important leaders in your sport.



If you produce consistently successful high school or college teams, you may be qualified to coach at the national or international level in the Junior Olympics, Olympics, Pan American Games, World University Games or Olympic Festivals. For more information, check with the United States Olympic Committee (see "Resources" at the back of this book).

You can keep in touch with the latest developments in your profession through coaching associations, clinics, books, and newsletters. By making the right connections today, you'll develop the resources you'll need to make a career

"Girls need to see women in leadership roles; otherwise they think only men can lead. That's an awful handicap to give half our population."



Coaches Advisory Roundtable

Networking

"If you travel around this country you can't miss it. Networking is becoming to this decade what consciousness raising was to the last. It's a primary way women discover that we are not crazy, the system is. We also discover that mutual-support groups can create change where the most courageous individual woman could not."

It could be called a trend— even a movement. Across the country, women coaches, administrators, and officials are joining together to help other women enter their profession, or move to different positions within the profession. These networks are both formal and informal. You may be a part of an informal network yourself. Informally, these networks consist of friends and business acquaintances and associates in sport.

To join this informal network, talk with other coaches about career possibilities. Ask them what they like and dislike about their jobs, and ask for advice about your career. Volunteer to work with people you respect or those who have jobs that appeal to you. Find out what qualifications are needed for those jobs. Arrange meetings with other professionals.

Go to coaching conferences and meetings of local and state coaching associations; introduce yourself to other coaches and administrators and make sure that you have an updated resume with you. Contact local sports professionals and let them know your availability; follow your conversation by sending a resume. If they have no openings, they may refer you to other jobs that they may have heard of through the grapevine or give you suggestions about whom to contact.

R esources

Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)

P.O. Box 68207, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (317) 872-2900

Amateur Softball Association (ASA)

2801 N.E. 50th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111 (405) 424-5266

American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP)

P.O. Box 5076, Champaign, IL 61820 (217) 351-5076

American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA)

122 Second Ave., Suite 217, San Mateo, CA 94401 (415) 375-8113

Council of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators (CCWAA)

340 Carver Hawkeye Arena, Iowa City, IA 52242 (319) 335-9247

Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)

4675 Sweetwater Blvd., Sugar Land, TX 77479 (713) 980-5742

**National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS)
and Affiliated National Coaches Council (ANCC)**

1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091 (703) 476-3450

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

1221 Baltimore Ave., Kansas City, MO 64105 (816) 842-5050

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

P.O. Box 1906, Mission, KS 66201 (913) 384-3220

National Federation of State High School Asso. (NFSHSA)

11724 Plaza Circle, Kansas City, MO 64154 (816) 464-5400

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

P.O. Box 7305, Colorado Springs, CO 80933 (719) 590-9788

National Softball Coaches Association (NSCA)

Univ. of Minnesota, 516 15th Avenue, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA)

2611 Old Okeechobee Rd., W. Palm Beach, FL 33409

The Athletics Congress (TAC)

P. O. Box 120, Indianapolis, IN 46206 (317) 638-9155

Women's Basketball Coaching Association (WBCA)

1687 Tullie Circle, Suite 127, Atlanta, GA 30329 (404) 321-2922

Women's Sports Foundation / Coaches Advisory Roundtable

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